Easter in Ukraine



Easter (in Ukrainian *Velykden*, 'the Great Day') is a beautiful mix of Christian practices, folklore and ancient pagan symbolism. It is one of the main holidays in Ukraine, which has been celebrated for thousands of years as a victory of the Light over Darkness, Spring over Winter, Day over Night. In 988, since Kyiv Rus adopted Christianity, it has also become the celebration of Christ's resurrection.

The last Sunday before Easter is called Willow Sunday. On this day people take willow branches with them to church in order to mark Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Palm trees don't grow in Ukrainian climate, hence the switch. What's more, willow is a symbol of the Tree of Life. Whipping someone slightly with a blessed willow branch is meant to bless that person with health, beauty and wealth. After Willow Sunday the Holy Week begins.



The Holy Week is preceded by 6 weeks of Lent, during which believers should abstain from meat, dairy products and alcohol. After that, the preparations for Easter can truly begin. Clean Thursday is the day dedicated to cleaning the house and yourself before the big holiday. Good Friday, or Mourning Friday, is the day, when Christ died, so people gather in the church for mourning. Any work, singing and joy is forbidden on this day.



On Easter Saturday people bake *paska* - delicious sweet bread, rich with eggs and butter, and made from the best wheat flour, usually flavored with vanilla, citron, rum, saffron or ginger. The recipes vary from home to home, but the thing all have in common is the characteristic cylindrical shape of paska, decorated on top. It is the most important part of the Easter basket, alongside roasted meet, butter, salt, horseradish, cheese, and, of course, ornamented eggs. All will be blessed at night or early in the morning to make it in time for the breakfast table on Easter Sunday.

LIVEWORKSHEETS



There is one special tradition, Ukraine is famous for. That is the art of *pysanka* - an ornamented egg, where complex drawing is put on with beeswax, and the egg is dipped into different coloured dyes. Every region has got its own style of *pysanka* and set of ornaments, collected through centuries. *Pysanka* is full of symbols. For example, an eight-shoulder star stands for the sun, warmth and joy, a circle - for eternity and immortality, a triangle represents the Trinity. The same is for colours, eg. black symbolises eternity, red - love, white - purity of the soul.Another method of putting a pattern on is scratching it on white or coloured surface with a sharp tool, called *driapanka.* Some people choose a simpler way and make *krashanky* instead, using only colours with no ornaments.

After returning from the church, people exchange traditional Easter greetings *'Khrystos Voskres!'* and '*Voistynu Voskres!*', give each other ornamented eggs and spend time with their families, rejoicing in Christs resurrection.

According to the text, answer the following questions:

1. Easter traditions in Ukraine are made of Christian practices only. T F
2. Whipping someone with a willow branch is considered to be rude. T F
3. Palm trees are not typical for Ukrainian climate. T F
4. It is acceptable to eat cheese and drink milk during the Lent. T F
5. Paska is the main part of the Easter basket. T F
6. Pysanka is made by scratching the surface of the egg with a needle. T F
7. Black colour of pysanka symbolises eternity. T F
8. Beeswax in used to make driapanka. T F

Untangle the words:

liwwlo _ _ _ _ _ _
ketsab _ _ _ _ _ _
naspyka _ _ _ _ _ _ _
naoremtn _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
myslob _ _ _ _ _ _
spaak _ _ _ _ _
tereniyt _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
erusrretcino _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Make your own pysanka, using patterns and colours from the frame:

LIVEWORKSHEETS